

BX
5550
B336v

BAXTER

THE VOICE OF THE COUNTRY
UPON THE IRISH CHURCH





THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

[FROM THE AUTHOR.]

THE VOICE OF THE COUNTRY

UPON

THE IRISH CHURCH.

BY

ROBERT BAXTER, ESQ.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 6 & 7, CHLARING-CROSS, S.W.

1869.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Ex Libris

C. K. OGDEN

[FROM THE AUTHOR.

THE VOICE OF THE COUNTRY

UPON

THE IRISH CHURCH.

BY

ROBERT BAXTER, ESQ.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 6 & 7, CHLARING-CROSS, S.W.

1869.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

The careful reading of a General Election is as necessary to the Politician, as the observation of the barometer to a Meteorologist. The latter does not draw his conclusions from the mere rise or fall of the mercury, but takes account of its previous state of settled altitude or stormy variation, and guides his judgment by carefully weighing each one of the various influences which affect it. So must the Politician, if he would draw sound inferences of the bearing of public opinion upon any proposed measure from the returns of a General Election, carefully discriminate how much of these results is due to other and collateral causes, and eliminate these foreign matters before he can safely mark the national voice on the selected topic. As many unwarranted assumptions have been drawn from the mere numerical returns, any attempt to point out and discuss the various public questions which have influenced the votes of the electors cannot be otherwise than welcome.

10, QUEEN SQUARE, WESTMINSTER,

4th February, 1869.

THE

VOICE OF THE COUNTRY UPON
THE IRISH CHURCH.

GREAT Britain is practically governed by public opinion—not the opinion of to-day, which may be varied to-morrow, but that pronounced opinion which, once clearly formed in the English mind, holds its own against all combatants—not the opinion of a class, nor of a party, nor of a district merely, nor even of one or two of the four great divisions of which the United Kingdom is composed, but the predominant opinion of the Empire. The search after public opinion is often perplexing, and inquirers may lose themselves in their pursuit; but, if patiently waited for, it in due time directs the political energy of the people, selects the Members of the House of Commons, predominates in the voice of that House, attracts the concurrence of the Peers, and makes its way to the Throne in the choice of the Executive Government.

The framework of our Constitution is such as readily to adapt itself to the varying phases of public opinion. The executive control of the country is so far separated from the Crown that a change of the policy of our Government is accom-

The march of
public
opinion.

Our Govern-
ment adapts
itself to public
opinion.

plished not, as in other countries, by the overthrow of a dynasty, but by the resignation of a Cabinet ; and the greatest constitutional changes merely result in lifting the party which has inaugurated them into the place of executive officers of the Crown, without any shock to the loyalty, either of the worsted or of the successful rivals.

The British Constitution of slow growth but great permanence.

Its characteristics indicate those of the people.

The slow growth and infrequent changes of the British Constitution are indications of its strength and solidity, as the succulent plant, which springs up speedily only rapidly to wither, strikingly contrasts with the slowly rising oak which centuries do not weaken. It is equally true that if you mark the characteristics of a nation's government you will readily learn the character of its people. A stable constitutional Government, ensuring freedom of thought and speech, liberty of action, protection of rights, and equal laws administered with impartiality, indicates a people not given to change, bold, self-confident whilst self-restrained, religiously submissive to law whilst unflinchingly maintaining liberty of action, of opinion, and of religious worship.

Such a people have all the elements of sound and successful energy, self-reliance, and national success. They can maintain among themselves a conflict of opinion and carry on a struggle for party superiority without descending into poisoned bitterness, or being goaded into violence or bloodshed.

Government by party.

The Government by party, though not of necessity part of our Constitution, has yet been the habitual practice of our nation. Our Senate-house

always finds within its walls Her Majesty's Ministers confronted by Her Majesty's Opposition. The first forming the executive, and clothed with the responsibility of governing, the other skirmishing on the flanks of the ruling body, or organizing an assault *en masse*, lives in the luxurious enjoyment of an Englishman's fond delight—to grumble and to find fault.

It is to the credit of our country that this conflict sinks into happy concord when the honour or safety of the nation is concerned, in analogy to the domestic platform where the unwise stranger stepping in to allay an alarming contest, finds himself the subject of united attack from the erst antagonistic combatants.

It does, however, sometimes happen that in the struggle for place and power the good of the country is overlooked, and the danger arising to the Constitution from a party move is disregarded if only the effort will ensure a party triumph.

The election of 1868, resulting from one of our infrequent constitutional changes, forms a crisis in the history of the country to which there is but one parallel within the present century. That parallel was in 1832, the first election after the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Bill of 1831-2.

Crisis in the elections of 1868.

The modification of the Constitution then made by the lowering of the franchise, nearly doubled the previously existing Constituencies of the kingdom, and raised them from about 500,000 to nearly 1,000,000.

Effect of the Reform Bills.

The Reform Bills of 1867-8 again nearly doubled the number of votes, raising it from

1,357,000 to 2,476,000. In each period the enlargement of the franchise was such as to transfer one-half of the electoral power of the kingdom into new hands, and the voters thus created, as they were new so their opinions were unknown, and only to be ascertained by the result of the elections.

Liberal tendency of newly enfranchised voters.

We entered upon the elections of 1868 with the experience of 1832 before us. It has always been estimated by politicians, of whatever class, that voters newly admitted to the franchise will naturally vote in favour of the party of movement to which they deem themselves indebted for the privilege long withheld, and now for the first time conceded; and that it is only after a continued enjoyment of their votes that they turn towards the party of conservation, in the desire to maintain their electoral status against the body of claimants who might neutralize or destroy their influence.

Experience of new voters in 1832.

In 1832 these principles received an emphatic realization. The party of Conservatism which in the preceding Parliament had run so nearly upon an equality with their opponents as to be only beaten by a majority of one,* was so totally overthrown as to have arrayed against it an overwhelming majority of 364.† This issue was

* On 21st March, 1831, on the second reading of the Reform Bill, the numbers were—for the Bill, 312; against it, 311.

† “Upon the whole, it was calculated when the returns were all made, that the Liberals had a majority of at least 5 to 1 in the House of Commons: there being scarcely 100 Tories in a House of 658 Members” (Alison, vol. 5, 358). “Altogether it was estimated that 511 Ministerialists and Reformers were

attained by the new voters siding in the elections with the liberals of the old Parliament, and by the power acquired in their union crushing the Conservative electors, and handing over the government of the country without check to the movement party.

Under a similar increase of the constituencies in 1868 it was natural to anticipate a somewhat similar result.

Besides this predominant element the state of political parties was itself peculiar. State of political parties in 1868.

The Liberals under Lord Palmerston had, excepting one single year, been in possession of power for ten years up to the period of that able statesman's death in 1865. At his demise the Premiership devolved upon Earl Russell, with Mr. Gladstone as his parliamentary leader in the Commons.

Lord Russell, neither taught by his own experience nor by the wisdom of Lord Palmerston, plunged into a Reform Bill. Bewildered in the conflict of parties which such a measure was calculated to provoke, whilst his leader in the Commons threw down his arms at the spectres of "the Cave" and "the Tea Room," Lord Russell resigned office in 1866, and made way for the accession of the Conservative party, who, under the leadership, first of Lord Derby and next of Mr. Disraeli, maintained themselves in office till the close of the session and the passing of the Reform Bill of 1868.

returned, and 147 (majority 364) who now designated as Conservatives, were Anti-Ministerialists" (Knight's Popular History, vol. 8, 310).

Strength of
the Liberal
party.

The innate strength of the Liberal party was manifest in the division which took place upon the Irish Church, where they commanded a majority of 65; and of the 658 members constituting the dissolved Parliament, no less than 366 were ranged on the Liberal benches against 292 on the Conservative, giving a total majority of 74.

The fact of the Liberal party having been thus, notwithstanding their majority in the House, two years out of power would naturally quicken their energies for the election contest, and bring them into the field upon mere party politics with a keener zest, as they were in greater number than their opponents.

The Irish
Church ques-
tion.

But a third element of influence was also cast into the cauldron of the elections of 1868. This was the proposal to disestablish and disendow the branch of the Protestant Established Church in Ireland. This question was made the rallying cry of the Liberal party. Its influence upon three sections of the Empire and upon an influential class within the fourth was notably great. In Ireland it presented itself to four millions and a half of Roman Catholics as an opportunity of annihilating their antagonist the Protestant Established Church, numbering only 700,000 followers; and as Ireland returned 105 out of the 658 Members, it seemed to be the field of a certain and important victory.

In Scotland too, which returned in the old Parliament 53 Members, increased in the new Parliament to 60, a proposal to disestablish the

Church was likely to be popular. Within living memory a majority of the population of Scotland had come out from the Presbyterian Established Church in order to maintain the right of the members of the congregation to a voice in the election of their incumbents, and these maintaining themselves under the name of the Free Church joined to the United Presbyterians were ready to do battle with a high hand against all establishments.

In Wales also the proposition for disestablishment was flattering. The majority of the inhabitants dissented from the Established Church, and were adverse to all establishments. In England the whole body of Nonconformists, comprising more than one-third of the population, trained and organized by an active political band, might be expected to welcome disestablishment in Ireland in order to form a basis on which to stand hereafter to propose disestablishment in England.

From these circumstances the Irish Church question bound as firm allies to the Liberal Party, Roman Catholics, and Radical Members ; conceding as it did to the Roman Catholics the overthrow of their Protestant rivals, and conceding to the Radicals the first step in the path of revolution, by dissociating Church and State, confiscating property for centuries appropriated for religious purposes, and making an inroad on the House of Lords in the withdrawal of the Irish bishops.

Thus stood the array on the political battle field :—

Array on
election battl
field of 1868.

1. Power of party politics.

First. *Mere party politics.* The Liberal against the Conservative. The first seeking to gain power—the last to hold it. Apart from the other influences of the Reform Bill and the Irish Church, there was no ground for assuming that the Liberal influence had waned, or that the party was not able to deliver themselves bravely in the fight, and maintain their ground.

2. Influence of Reform Bill and new voters.

Second. *The influence of the Reform Bills* under which, according to all known political principles and experience, a great advantage would accrue to the Liberal Party, as in 1832 they so triumphed as absolutely to be left without a rival, gaining in that single election a majority of 364 votes.

3. Impulse from attack on the Irish Church.

Thirdly. *The Revolutionary Proposal to disestablish and disendow the Irish Church*, by which the Roman Catholic element in Ireland, and the Anti-Establishment elements in England, Scotland, and Wales were lashed into unwonted energy in support of the Liberal cause.

Results of the election presented by the "Times," Dec. 2, 1858.

And now, what were the results of the election? We will take them from the *Times* newspaper of December 2nd, 1858. The following is their summary:—

"The general results of the election may be thus stated:—

	Liberal.	Conservative.
"Gain on old seats	64	51
"Gain on new seats	27	24
	—	—
	91	75
"Deduct loss by disfranchised } seats }	27	26
	—	—
	64	49

“The net Liberal gain is thus 15, which is equivalent on a division to 30 votes.

“The three seats not yet filled up are of course not included in the above summary.”

These three seats were Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities (new seats), and Orkney and Shetland (Liberal in the last Parliament), and all three were returned Liberals, which would make the 15 into 17, but as the two University seats were new, would only raise the gain on a division to 32.

Thus then we find from the party organ of the Liberals the total gain on the United Kingdom is stated to be 17 seats, equal to 32 votes upon a division. This is a result which might have accrued simply from the struggle of party politics. But what has become of the influence of the Reform Bill? Comparing this gain of 32 votes with the gain of 364 upon the Reform Bill of 1831, when the increase to the constituency was not proportionately larger but was numerically many times inferior, it is evident some strong counteracting current had turned back the flood of Liberal influences which have always before followed the extension of the suffrage, and we must sedulously inquire what was this counteracting force? We believe it to be nothing more or less than the unpopularity, especially in England, of Mr. Gladstone's propositions on the Irish Church.

It will be well, however, to look more in detail at the results of the election as reported by Mr. Dudley Baxter in his statistical tables, entitled “The Results of the General Election.” He there, at page 8, states—

Liberal gain of only 17 seats shows Reform influence neutralized by the unpopularity of the Irish question.

Results in detail given by Mr. Dudley Baxter.

* The 658 seats of the new Parliament, counting Horsham on both sides, gives 385 Liberals and 274 Conservatives, or a Liberal majority of 111, being a gain on a division of 37.

* These majorities were divided between the four countries of the United Kingdom, as follows:—

GAIN OF MEMBERS.

Effect as to
seats.

	Liberal Majority.		Gain on a Division.	
	Old Par- liament.	New Par- liament.	Conser- vative.	Liberal.
England	31	26	5	
Wales	5	14	..	9
Scotland	31	44	..	13
Ireland	7	27	..	20
United Kingdom ..	74	111	5	42
Net gains on a division ..	..	..	..	37

He also, at page 10, gives the gain in population by the two parties as follows:—

GAIN IN POPULATION REPRESENTED.

Effect as to
population.

	Liberal Majority.		Gain on a Division.	
	Old Parlia- ment.	New Par- liament.	Conserva- tive.	Liberal.
England	3,092,900	926,100	2,166,800	
Wales	190,700	516,900	..	326,200
Scotland	1,894,900	2,479,300	..	584,400
Ireland	41,300 (minority)	782,800	..	824,100
United Kingdom ..	5,137,200	4,705,100	2,166,800	1,734,700
Net gain on a di- vision .. ..	..	..	432,100	

He states that in this table (although he does not consider it strictly justifiable) he has excluded from the counties all borough population. This is manifestly erroneous, for the following reasons :—

This calculation excludes from counties the borough population.

(1.) The borough freeholders exercise a large voting power in the counties, and the boroughs form part of the county area.

(2.) The county votes possessed in the boroughs are independent of the borough votes, and the county Member represents the people in the borough, although this representation is supplemented by borough Members elected on another franchise.

(3.) The borough county voters are known to exercise a great, and in many cases a pre dominating influence in the return of county Members.

It is clear, therefore, that when measuring the influence of the elections in the ratio of population, we should deal with the counties including the borough population, and though the borough population will be twice counted it equally applies to both parties, and no other plan will fairly show the ratio of population represented by the members of each party.

The following Summary will show, on this basis, the gain in population represented as well by the county Members as by the borough Members. The details are given in the Table printed in the Appendix :—

GAIN IN POPULATION REPRESENTED.

Corrected
table of gain
in population.

	Liberal Majority.		Gain on a Division.	
	Old Parlia- ment.	New Par- liament.	Conserva- tive.	Liberal.
ENGLAND.				
Boroughs ..	4,561,400	5,032,800	..	471,400
Counties ..	256,400 (minority)	6,900,800 (minority)	6,644,400	
WALES.				
Boroughs ..	278,600	320,800	..	42,200
Counties ..	26,200	406,400	..	380,200
SCOTLAND.				
Boroughs ..	1,244,100	1,264,600	..	20,500
Counties ..	1,015,700	2,337,900	..	1,322,200
IRELAND.				
Boroughs ..	124,700	328,000	..	203,300
Counties ..	415,800 (minority)	361,300	..	777,100
UNITED KING- DOM.				
Boroughs, ..	6,208,800	6,946,200	..	737,400
Counties ..	369,700	3,795,200 (minority)	4,164,900	
Net gain on a di- vision .. ..	..	..	3,427,500	

Effect of cor-
rected tables.

Thus combining the whole population embraced in the area of the counties, as represented by county Members, and the population of the boroughs repeated, as also represented by borough Members, each party is given the full value of its representation. The Conservative gain on population in England is found to be 6,644,400, and the Conservative gain upon the whole United Kingdom 3,427,500, and the gross ratio of population in England is Conservative 14, 885,050, to Liberal 13,017,050.

The results of the election, as thus presented, shew for the United Kingdom a gain by the Liberal party of 37 votes in a division, but a loss by them of 3,427,500 in population; representing proportionately a gain in party votes of under 6 per cent. of the whole House, and a loss of population of $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the whole population, which, duplicating the borough population, is represented by 40,282,119.

Liberal gain on seats and loss on population.

But these tables furnish materials for more minute and important investigation.

Taking *England* alone, there is a gain to the Conservatives of five votes, and 6,644,400, or nearly one-fourth of the population, which, by the duplication of the borough population, stands represented at 27,902,500.

In England the Liberals lose as well in seats as population.

Now England contains 19,000,000 out of our actual 29,000,000, or, speaking in round numbers, two parts out of three of our entire population.

England possesses $\frac{2}{3}$ of population, $\frac{2}{3}$ of seats, and double the wealth.

England also possesses 463 members out of the 658, being more than two-thirds of the House, and in point of wealth certainly more than twice that represented by the remainder of the United Kingdom.

If England thus contains two-thirds of the population, two-thirds of the members, and twice the wealth, it is entitled to speak emphatically upon every great constitutional question. It is undoubtedly also the fairest field on which to test the result of the election in regard to the Irish Church.

England the fairest field on which to test the Irish question.

(1.) Political parties are nearly equal. In the last Parliament the English members were 251 Liberals to 220 Conservatives, a tolerably equal division.

(2.) It possesses a Church Establishment which has been long tried, and with the advantages and disadvantages of which its people have been long conversant.

(3.) The Non-conformist element within it is highly organized and inured to the conflict.

(4.) The question does not directly concern England, but is confined to Ireland, although the friends of the English Establishment would naturally oppose, and the Non-conformists support, the disestablishment in Ireland.

England pro-
nounces em-
phatically
against the
overthrow of
the Irish
Church.

The result of the election of 1868 shews public opinion in England so strongly set against Mr. Gladstone's attack on the Irish Church, as not only to neutralize the effect of the Reform Bill, but actually to reduce the Liberal majority of members, and bring over a majority of population to the Conservative side.*

Ireland not a
fair test on
this question,
but Liberals
only gained
10 seats.

In Ireland the result of the election was a gain of only 10 members from the old Conservative total of 49, and out of the 105 members returned by Ireland to leave, ranged now 39 Conservatives compared with 66 Liberals, increasing the majority of 7 which existed in 1865 to a majority of 27.

This, it must be remembered, was the effect of

* The following extract from the *Times*' leader of November 28, 1868, marks their sense of the popular voice in England:—

"It cannot be denied, that if there is one thing more evident than another as the result of the Elections, it is that the Irish Establishment has been maintained by the superior force, rather unenlightened, we hope, than unjust, of English opinion against the judgment of Scotland and the resentment of the Irish people."

arraying 4,500,000 of Roman Catholics against 700,000 Protestants. The gain is certainly not such as to shew an overwhelming feeling even in Ireland in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church.

In Scotland the Liberals gained over from the Conservative ranks 3 seats, and appropriated the whole of the 7 new members transferred to that country.

Scotland always Liberal, but only changed 3 old seats and appropriated the 7 new seats.

This appropriation was perfectly natural without reference to the Establishment question. In the old Parliament every representative of every borough in Scotland was a Liberal, and as four new members were given to the Scotch boroughs these would necessarily fall into the same gulf.

Of the counties of Scotland, out of 30 in the old Parliament, the Conservatives only held 11 seats, and the 3 new members added to the counties went there under the probability of two to one that they would be returned Liberals.

Of the 53 members returned under the old Parliament the Conservatives only held 11 seats, and of the 60 members returned to the new Parliament the Conservative element was reduced to 8 seats.

Under the political circumstances of Scotland, the Conservatives could expect nothing from the new members. The Establishment cry may be held to have deprived them of three of the old members, and although Scotland, in the eye of a Conservative, presents a most melancholy picture, the gloomy tints were sufficiently deep in the old Parliament to prevent the additional dark streaks

in the loss of three seats being regarded as any remarkable exaggeration of the cloudy landscape. The Liberal gain of 3 old seats, and of the 7 new seats gave them a gain, on division, of 13 in respect of Scotland.

In Wales the Liberals gained 4 old seats and 1 new seat.

In *Wales*, the Conservatives lost 3 seats in the counties, and 1 in the boroughs, besides 1 new member, which was given to raise the total members for Wales to 30. The 4 old seats and the 1 new seat give to the Liberals a gain on a division of 13.

Liberal gains in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales express no very emphatic opinion.

The gains thus made in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales were certainly not such as to express any very emphatic feeling even in those divisions of the United Kingdom. If there were any truth in the cry of "Justice to Ireland," that truth would commend itself so emphatically to the Irish mind—in at least its Roman Catholic element—as to lead them to return every member in support of the cause. As it was, only 10 members out of 105, or 10 per cent. of the representation, was affected by the cry; but miserable as was the response in Ireland of 10 seats, if we take away the Irish majority from the total, it leaves only a majority on a division of 17 occurring from the other divisions.

The Liberal gain in seats only $\frac{1}{36}$ part or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the whole House.

Viewed in another aspect, the *Times* claims a gain of 17 seats for the United Kingdom, and this number is $\frac{1}{36}$ part, or about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the

Liberal loss in population $\frac{1}{12}$, or $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of whole population.

House of Commons, whilst the loss in population is 3,427,500 out of a total (duplicating the boroughs) of 40,311,900, or more than $\frac{1}{12}$, or $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. If we were justified in saying that these

17 seats represented the voice of the country upon the Irish Church question, we can only add the voice is very feeble, and the cause must be very weak, which finds itself endorsed by only $\frac{1}{36}$ part of the representation of the Kingdom, and dishonoured by $\frac{1}{12}$ part of the population.

We are not, however, authorized so to read, even the asserted majority. The occurrence of the Reform Bill gave to the Liberal party the right to expect a majority of hundreds to be added to them as the result of the enlargement of the franchise, and the effect of the Irish Church question was to cancel this majority, or reduce it to the minimum of 17. The voice of the country therefore heard with reference to the circumstances of the election has pronounced against Mr. Gladstone's measure.

Perhaps, however, it will be said, "we care nothing for your analysis, we will not inquire of what elements, or from what circumstances our majority has arisen, but the stern fact is, we have a majority of more than 100 in the House, and that will enable us to carry Mr. Gladstone's measure of disestablishing and disendowing the Irish Church." This would be true, if the majority alluded to could be relied on for such a purpose, but—besides the actual result of the election counted by seats gained or won—there has been observable an important feature, which must be borne in mind when we come to deal with the question of the value of Mr. Gladstone's majority.

The feature to which we refer, is the marked re-action within the Liberal Party caused by the

Even the gain cannot be reckoned as due to the Irish Church question.

The Liberal majority in the House cannot be relied upon against the Irish Church.

A reaction in the Liberal party in the

country
against that
measure.

pro-Romish and revolutionary tendency of the proposed disestablishment.

From the Duke of Portland downwards, noblemen, gentlemen, and clergy of great influence have left the party, some distinctly passing over to the Conservatives, but more disconnecting themselves from their own political friends without in the late struggle acting with the opponents; and to those who have the opportunity of knowing the local feeling throughout the country, the reaction within the old Liberal party has been the striking feature of the day.

The proverbial slowness with which Englishmen, once fully committed, are accustomed to change sides, has prevented this reaction operating largely upon the late election. The first step in distrust is to stand aloof from your party—it is another, and much more advanced position to join the ranks of their opponents. Mr. Gladstone's personal experience, and the experience of many other leading members of his party, will endorse the fact to which we are alluding.

Disaffection in
the Liberal
camp.

There is great disaffection in the Liberal camp, even among those who have not actually deserted. Many who loyally fight and vote with their party complain of the measures their party zeal compels them to support. The ground for discontent is that they consider their Chief has set himself to take to pieces the British Constitution in the disestablishment of the Church, in taking side with Romanism against Protestantism, and in hounding on the Revolutionists by the taste of blood in

disendowment, confiscation, and banishing the Irish Bishops from the House of Peers.

And not only is this reaction manifest in the higher ranks, but popular constituencies have in a very marked manner entered upon it. South Lan-^{Reaction in}cashire may be quoted, and the whole of Lancashire ^{populous} constituencies. has followed suit. This county, which contains $\frac{1}{20}$ th part of the population of the United Kingdom, and more than $\frac{1}{8}$ th part of our English population, having in the old Parliament returned, upon the whole of its members, a majority of 1 Liberal, has in the present Parliament returned a majority of 11 Conservatives out of the total of its 33 members.

The reaction has been manifest in some of the most populous boroughs. Manchester, with its 358,000 of population, which never before returned a Conservative, has sent one to this Parliament at the head of the poll.

Salford, with 102,000 population, having before returned Liberals has now returned two Conservatives.

Westminster, with 254,000 population, which never returned a Conservative, has this year returned one at the head of the poll.

London, with its 112,000 population, has also returned one Conservative, having for years past been a close borough in the hands of the Liberals.

The county of Middlesex, also long ruled over by Liberal influence, has returned a Conservative at the head of the poll.

Liverpool, with a population of 444,000 maintains its return of 2 Conservatives to 1 Liberal.

These are signs of rapid and solid reaction not ^{Many Liberals} will not vote

for the
measure.

to be disregarded. There are also within the ranks of the Liberal party many county as well as borough Members, who have avowed they will not support the Irish measure, whilst other Liberal Members, returned without opposition, through courtesy or neighbourly feeling, or returned by small majorities, know so well the feeling of a vast body of their constituents in favour of the Irish Church as to be conscious that it will be at the peril of their re-election if they support its confiscation.

Even such a
majority in
the Commons,
with unpopu-
larity in the
country, can-
not carry the
measure.

But—even supposing Mr. Gladstone to be able to bring up the whole of his Members, and carry through a Bill for effecting his measure with a majority of 100—what is the force of this majority in the face of the general feeling of the country, and the overwhelming majority against it in the House of Lords?

It has been our habit to expect that—upon measures backed by the general feeling of the country, and where we are conscious the demand for them is growing—the House of Lords, under a sense of what is necessary in a constitutional country, may defer to that feeling against what would have been their own convictions, if such feelings did not exist; but it is obvious in the present case the feeling of the country is against the measure, and the majority gained by the Liberals is a mere party majority pressing a measure which is unpopular.

A great con-
stitutional
change should
only be made
on a clearly
pronounced
public opinion.

If a great constitutional change is to be submitted to, we expect that there should be something like unanimity, or at all events an overwhelming popular feeling in its favour, but here

the reverse is the case. The popular voice in England by a majority of one-fourth, and in the United Kingdom by a smaller majority of one-twelfth of the entire population, has declared against the measure, and the very serious reaction to which we have pointed safely indicates that as time goes on, the unpopularity thus marked is increasing.

Under such circumstances can it be anticipated that the House of Lords will feel itself called to act upon any other principle than its own judgment of the expediency or in expediency of the measure? and what this judgment is can be no matter of doubt.

The history of the Appropriation Clause of 1835 is very instructive, and well worth perusal in the present position of affairs.

In 1835, March 30th, Lord John Russell moved for a Committee of the whole House to consider the temporalities of the Established Church in Ireland, with a view to apply any surplus to education.

The Liberal use of the Appropriation Clause of 1835 furnishes a precedent for abandoning the Irish Church measure.

The division on this motion was 322 against 289, leaving Sir Robert Peel's Ministry in a minority of 33, and upon this Sir Robert Peel resigned.

The observations of the historian Alison upon this question, vol. 6, p. 142, are very apposite:—

“The Irish Catholics, ascertained by experience to hold the balance in the House of Commons in their hands, were sure to give it their unanimous and zealous support; the Dissenters would join their ranks from hostility to the common enemy—the Church of England; the Radicals, from enmity to any Government, and a desire to get the point of the

revolutionary wedge into the weakest part of our national institutions. Thus, from different motives, all classes of the opposition might be expected to join in support of this motion, and the great problem which ambition is ever ready to solve in representative States was solved, viz., to find a question upon which parties the most at variance can unite without compromising their own consistency."

On the 26th June, 1835, the Government brought forward their Bill, and put in the Appropriation Clause, and the Bill was carried on a division by 319 to 282, presenting a majority of 37.

It was sent to the House of Lords, where the Appropriation Clause was thrown out on a division by 138 to 41, giving a majority of 97.

Again, in April, 1836, the Government introduced the Irish Church Bill, being the same in substance as that last presented to the House. It was passed by a vote of 290 to 264, giving a majority of 26, but again when the Bill reached the House of Lords it was rejected by a vote of 138 to 47, being a majority of 91.

On this occasion the present stock cry of "Justice to Ireland" was raised, and flourished in the face of the two Houses of Parliament by Mr. O'Connell.

In June, 1837, on the demise of the King, a general election ensued, which left the state of political parties much in the same condition as before, and continued the Whigs in possession of power. The historian of this period records:—

"On the 27th March, 1838, Sir Robert Peel enquired of Lord John Russell what course he intended to pursue with regard to the Irish Tithe Bill, and whether he meant to introduce it with the Appropriation Clause in terms of the reso-

lution of 1835. Lord John Russell stated, in reply, that the Ministers intended to place the Tithe question on a footing altogether new, as it appeared useless and irritating to prolong, after a conflict of four years, an argument which produced nothing. It was generally felt at the time, what was the truth, that this was an announcement of the abandonment of the Appropriation Clause. * * * * *

The Bill was brought forward on July 2nd, without the Appropriation Clause, and a motion made by Mr. Ward for the restoration of that clause was lost by a majority of 270 to 46, the Ministers themselves voting against it.”—(Alison, vol. vi, p. 232).

We have thus the precedent of a measure for appropriating to education a portion of the income of the Irish Church, carried by the House of Commons three times—first on a resolution, and twice on Bills introduced for effecting it. We see it twice rejected by the House of Lords, and finally abandoned by the Ministry that proposed it.

The Liberal Government having found the measure so little satisfactory to their own influential friends, and so little popular in the country, felt compelled to remit it to be embalmed in history as a party move which effectually transferred to them the seats of power, but which was cast aside after it had answered its purpose. This is the mummy which, after eleven years of embalmed rest, has now its swathing bands unrolled to present it anew in its party beauty to the Empire.

The question now before us is not one between the rich and the poor, nor between the privileged and the working classes, nor even between a party of movement and a party of reaction. It is simply a question (only accidentally assuming a political garb) of Romanism against Protestantism, and of

The measure not strictly a political party question.

Non-conformity against Church Establishments. Revolution seizes the occasion to make war against as well the moderate Liberals as the Conservatives.

The great body of the people of the Empire are Protestant, in the proportion of about 24,000,000 to 6,000,000, and those who are not Conservative are also moderate in their Liberalism. The section of extreme Liberals or revolutionists is numerically very small. We may also add that the great body of the people of the Empire do not desire the overthrow of Establishments, whatever the unanimity with which they sustain perfect freedom of religious opinion and of worship.

Public opinion
is against it.

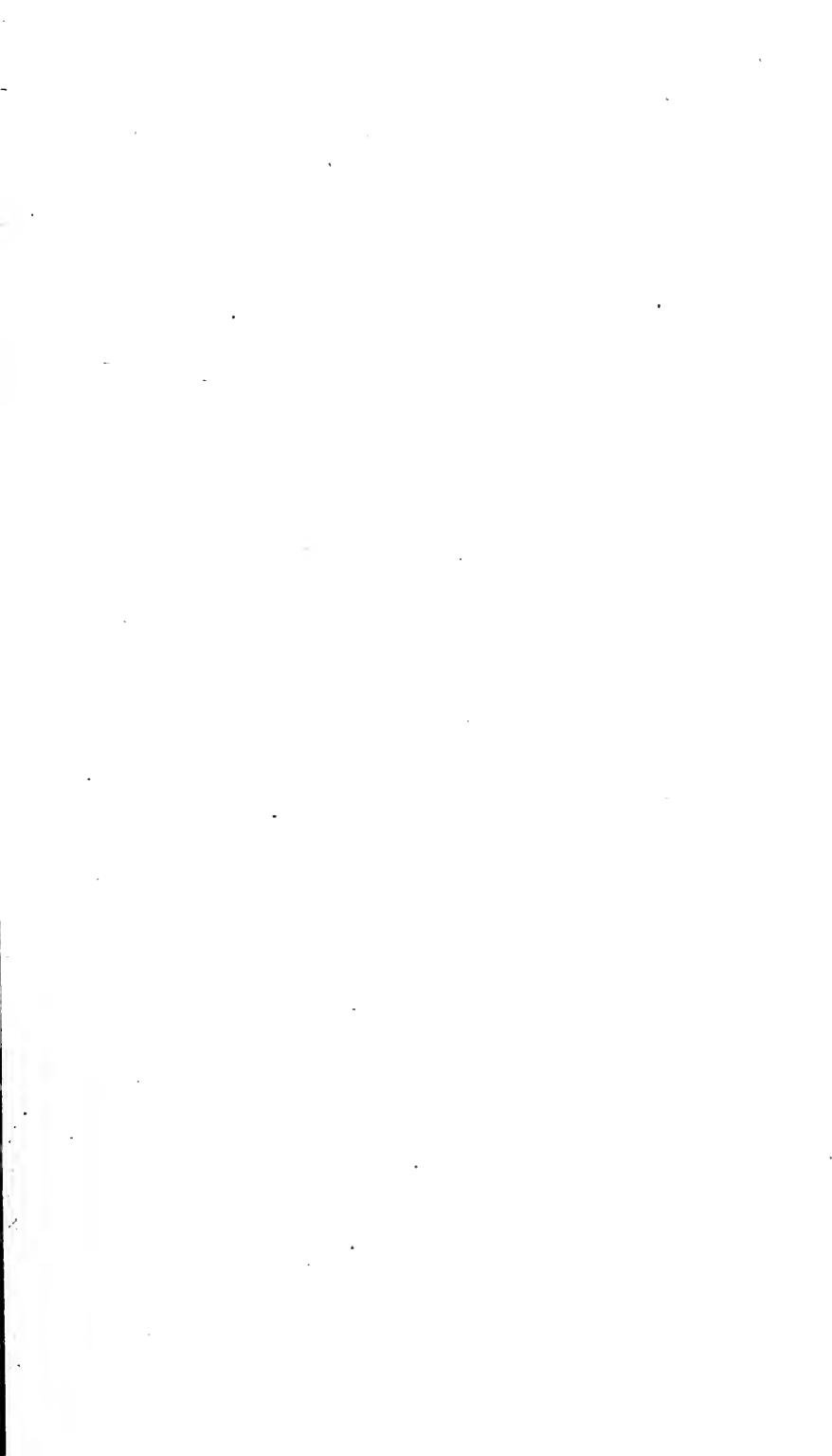
Casting aside all party views, and enquiring after that general feeling of the country, which, superior to party, will always aim to sustain a peaceable Government and the solid prosperity of the Empire, and which we are accustomed to regard as *public opinion*, can we hesitate to discern that public opinion condemns the measures against the Irish Church to which Mr. Gladstone and his party stand committed?

APPENDIX.

The following Table is constructed on the principle of counting the Population of the Boroughs with the Counties to which they belong, to show the whole Population actually represented by each County Member, and counting the Borough Population again, to show its representation by the Borough Member.

	Members.		Population represented.		
	C.	L.	Total.	By Conservatives.	By Liberals.
ENGLAND.					
<i>Counties.</i>					
New Parliament..	125	47	18,945,300	12,923,050	6,022,250
Old Parliament ..	96	51	18,945,300	9,600,850	9,344,450
<i>Boroughs.</i>					
New Parliament..	94	198	8,956,800	1,962,000	6,994,800
Old Parliament ..	124	200	8,290,600	1,864,600	6,426,000
<i>Total.</i>					
New Parliament..	219	245	27,902,100	14,885,050	13,017,050
Old Parliament ..	220	251	27,235,900	11,465,450	15,770,450
WALES.					
<i>Counties.</i>					
New Parliament..	6	9	1,111,500	352,550	758,950
Old Parliament ..	9	6	1,111,500	542,650	568,850
<i>Boroughs.</i>					
New Parliament..	2	13	379,000	29,100	349,900
Old Parliament ..	3	11	345,200	33,300	311,900
<i>Total.</i>					
New Parliament..	8	22	1,490,500	381,650	1,108,850
Old Parliament ..	12	17	1,456,700	575,950	880,750

	Members.		Population represented.		
	C.	L.	Total.	By Con- servatives.	By Liberals.
SCOTLAND.					
<i>Counties.</i>					
New Parliament ..	8	24	3,062,100	362,100	2,700,000
Old Parliament ..	11	19	3,062,100	1,023,200	2,038,900
<i>Boroughs.</i>					
New Parliament ..	..	27	1,264,600	..	1,264,600
Old Parliament ..	..	23	1,244,100	..	1,244,100
<i>Total.</i>					
New Parliament ..	8	51	4,326,700	362,100	3,964,600
Old Parliament ..	11	42	4,306,200	1,023,200	3,283,000
IRELAND.					
<i>Counties.</i>					
New Parliament ..	27	37	5,798,400	2,718,550	3,079,850
Old Parliament ..	30	34	5,798,400	3,107,100	2,691,300
<i>Boroughs.</i>					
New Parliament ..	13	28	794,200	233,100	561,100
Old Parliament ..	19	22	794,200	334,750	459,450
<i>Total.</i>					
New Parliament ..	40	65	6,592,600	2,951,650	3,640,950
Old Parliament ..	49	56	6,592,600	3,441,850	3,150,750
UNITED KINGDOM					
<i>Counties.</i>					
New Parliament ..	166	117	28,917,300	16,356,250	12,561,050
Old Parliament ..	146	110	28,917,300	14,273,800	14,643,500
<i>Boroughs.</i>					
New Parliament ..	109	266	11,394,600	2,224,200	9,170,400
Old Parliament ..	146	256	10,674,100	2,232,650	8,441,450
<i>Total.</i>					
New Parliament ..	275	383	40,311,900	18,580,450	21,731,450
Old Parliament ..	292	366	39,591,400	16,506,450	23,084,950



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9-Series 4939

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FAC



AA 000 771 124 5

